**Request for Applications**

RFA – 2023-2024.2.1a

**Roommate-Matching Service**

**FUNDING AGENCY: North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD)*,*** NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Secretary

**ISSUE DATE: June 30th, 2022**

**DEADLINE DATE: August 31st, 2022**

**Receipt of applications online at** [**www.ddsuite.org**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org) **is preferred but not required. All applications must be received by 5:00 pm EDT on August 31st, 2022. Please notify at least two weeks in advance of the due date if you need application materials in an alternate format or otherwise require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Direct all inquiries concerning this Request for Applications (RFA) to:

**Mailing Address:**

NCCDD-RFA

North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

3109 Poplarwood Court, Suite 105

Raleigh, NC 27604

**Via Email:** RFAinfo@nccdd.org

**Delivery Information:**

Applicants for this RFA are strongly encouraged to submit the application electronically in the DD Suite online database found at [**www.ddsuite.org**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org). Applicants that submit in hard copy are responsible for including all required elements in the submission packet.

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

The NCCDD makes funds available to fulfill its mission in accordance with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and the Council’s Five-Year State Plan. The NCCDD’s major funding source is the United States Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Disabilities, Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The NCCDD makes funds available primarily through competitive bids or Requests for Applications (RFAs). A general description of the current RFA is included in this document. The complete RFA package is available through DD Suite ([www.ddsuite.org](https://www.ddsuite.org/?nofa_id=1247)) or may be requested in alternate formats or by mail. Please complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply if your organization or agency intends to apply.

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for profit, or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organization, agency, or non-profit demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, non-profit private entities must also submit proof of 501(c)(3) status with a [**recent IRS determination letter**](https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-affirmation-letters).The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Private non-profit and for-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents (see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

**II. ABOUT NCCDD**

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), authorized under Public Law 106-402, the DD Act, is one of 56 entities of its type in the United States and the territories. The NCCDD is an independent agency located in the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). NCCDD’s activities are governed by a 40-member body, appointed by the Governor, and comprised of at least 60 percent people living with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Other members include legislators and policymakers representing various agencies and organizations having a vested interest in people with I/DD. The Council’s [quarterly meetings](https://www.nccdd.org/the-council/meeting-agendas-minutes.html) are open to the public.

The mission of the NCCDD is to assure that individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, contribution, self-determination, integration, and inclusion in the community. The NCCDD achieves this mission by promoting advocacy and leadership, community capacity building and systems change activities. It also serves in an advisory capacity, under state law, to the NC DHHS.

The NCCDD has established goals and objectives in its Five-Year Plan (2022-2026). These goals represent the most pressing needs as identified by stakeholders in North Carolina. These goals are approved by the Council as the framework for its work within the context of the Five-Year Plan.

GOAL 1: By 2026, increase financial security through asset development for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 2: By 2026, increase community living for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 3: By 2026, increase advocacy for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

This RFA will address **Goal 2, Objective A:**

Increase access to affordable, accessible, safe, and fully integrated housing that provides choice and flexibility regarding where and with whom they live.

Measurement: More individuals with I/DD will choose where and with whom to live in their community.

For further information on the work of the NCCDD, please see the NCCDD Five-Year State Plan at our website by clicking <https://nccdd.org/the-council/five-year-plan.html>

**III. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

***INTENT:***

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) intends to fund an initiative to establish a roommate-matching service for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) to find a compatible roommate or a live-in caregiver in North Carolina.

***BACKGROUND:***

During NCCDD’s three-year *Supported Living: Making the Difference* initiative, family members of individuals with I/DD expressed an interest in seeing the State of North Carolina and its Department of Health and Human Services invest in a roommate-matching platform for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. One of the primary benefits of a roommate-matching platform or service is the ability to match a person with I/DD with a compatible person with a disability or other person who can act as a caregiver. Having a roommate reduces housing-related costs for each individual because they share the costs such as the rent and the utilities payments as well as the responsibilities such as cleaning. Bridges MN, a provider agency in Minnesota, shared an example by suggesting that one person might not be able to afford a one-bedroom apartment at $900 per month, but two people could afford a two-bedroom apartment at $1,200 per month where each person pays $600 of the cost. However, despite the benefits of matching people to become roommates, North Carolina does not currently have any type of formal roommate-matching platform or service available that is known to the Council.

The proposed initiative will take place during a time of significant need and change within the I/DD system in North Carolina. North Carolina experienced a Direct Support Professional (DSP) crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic where DSPs could not work for health and safety reasons or took higher-paying jobs. On July 1st, 2021, the Council started the *Supported Living: A How-to Guidebook* initiative to produce a step-by-step how-to guide to help individuals with the highest level of needs, their families, and service providers understand how to make Supported Living work successfully. On the same date, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services launched a statewide Strategic Housing Plan that is developing a five-year plan to implement between 2022 and 2027. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic and Medicaid Transformation will all have an impact on the I/DD system. Also, on October 1st, 2021, the Council launched an initiative called *The Unmet Needs Initiative:* *A Coordinated Campaign to Meet the Unmet Needs* to take action on finding ways to meet the needs of the thousands of individuals with I/DD on the Registry of Unmet Needs.

**Proposed Objectives:**

1. Establish a roommate-matching service, platform, or portal that will help individuals with I/DD both lower their housing costs and find a compatible roommate who may also serve as a caregiver, a Direct Support Professional (DSP), a friend, a mentor, and more.
2. Demonstrate the value of a roommate-matching service as a way for individuals with I/DD to find a suitable and sustainable living arrangement and for families of these individuals to find a suitable and sustainable living arrangement for their loved one with I/DD.
3. Provide education on the potential tax and other benefits for live-in caregivers living with a person with I/DD as well as education on the benefits and other factors for people with I/DD to consider when choosing to live with a roommate.
4. Help stabilize the DSP crisis in North Carolina by providing opportunities for individuals with I/DD to live with their DSP or caregiver and have the support they need at home instead of relying on DSPs and caregivers who may come work in the home only whenever they are available.

***DELIVERABLES:***

The organization chosen by the NCCDD will be expected to:

1. Bring an existing roommate-matching platform or service to North Carolina. This could be done through a subcontract with an existing portal or by an existing portal provider expanding into North Carolina. Or develop a new one if the allotted funding allows, giving careful consideration to the potential costs involved in the development and establishment of a new platform and all of the related technological aspects.

2. Facilitate roommate matching and shared living development or identify a provider organization or multiple provider organizations to facilitate roommate matching and shared living development to assist individuals with I/DD in North Carolina who want a roommate to safely find a suitable, compatible roommate who may be another person with I/DD or a live-in caregiver.

3. Provide adequate training for the provider organization to use the platform and serve as the connector creating and/or facilitating matches and also developing sustainable housing plans with the individuals and their families that take advantage of all available resources.

4. Assist people with I/DD in finding a compatible roommate who could be another person with I/DD, a live-in caregiver/DSP, or a companion who might not have a disability or a defined caregiving role. This matching process must also help people entering into a roommate matching arrangement to find a safe, affordable, accessible place for the person with I/DD to live (if this person does not already have a suitable place to live with a room available for the new roommate).

5. Market the roommate-matching service and conduct trainings and workshops on the benefits and the other considerations that arise when matching with a roommate.

6. Pilot this roommate-matching service in one or more regions of North Carolina while working to ensure that this service will become available on a statewide basis in all 100 counties, including urban and rural areas, available to all individuals with I/DD, regardless of waiver status or financial resources, who are looking for a roommate or a shared living arrangement.

7. Ensure that certain safety protocols are in place such as criminal history disclosures and background checks are available to protect the individual with I/DD seeking a roommate. Specifically:

1. Gather the full legal name and telephone number of each individual seeking to enter into a roommate-matching agreement.
2. Conduct a background check through the state criminal court system for any state(s) that the individuals have lived in and the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website.
	* Note that the existence of a criminal record will not necessarily disqualify someone from entering into a roommate-matching arrangement. Instead, the facilitator will fully disclose this information to all parties involved in the potential roommate-matching arrangement to consider prior to signing a formal roommate-matching agreement.
3. Ensure that individuals with I/DD and their family members assisting them with finding a roommate do their due diligence in ascertaining a potential roommate’s background and interests to better assure a safe and compatible roommate match.
4. Ensure that access to the roommate-matching pool is by invitation only to prevent individuals who do not have a genuine interest in a roommate match from entering the pool.
5. Provide guidance to all potential parties on how to engage with connections to ensure safety as well as guidance on appropriate versus inappropriate behavior and communications.

8. If there will be a fee to use the service, provide funds to assist a designated number of individuals with I/DD and their families to access any such the service, platform, or portal at no cost to them as a way to demonstrate the value of this service to North Carolinians with I/DD and their families who are desperate to find a safe and sustainable housing arrangement for their loved one.

9. Provide education on general issues involved in housing and living with roommates in plain language, including different housing options, rental agreements, landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities, shared payments for rent, utilities and related costs, safety considerations, and issues that may arise if a roommate wishes to move out or terminate a rental agreement.

10. In situations where the roommate serves as a live-in caregiver, ensure that a process is in place to secure alternate caregivers when the live-in caregiver goes on vacation or becomes unavailable in an emergency situation. Educate everyone entering into a roommate-matching agreement on the importance of ensuring that sufficient care is available in these situations.

11. Provide education on natural supports and Personal Support Network development so that individuals with I/DD who enter into roommate-matching agreements and their live-in caregivers can understand how the individual can truly participate in the community in which they live.

***ADDITIONAL CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:***

**Performance Requirements**

Provide NCCDD the mandatory reports (i.e., quarterly/annual programmatic reports in the NCCDD’s DD Suite database, monthly fiscal reports for reimbursements, Initiative Information Sheet updates, and other relevant reports deemed necessary).

Also, the applicant selected for theinitiative will be expected to establish and operationalize activities to facilitate outreach to and inclusion of the Hispanic/Latino I/DD community. The 2022-2026 State Plans of Councils on Developmental Disabilities must identify disparity among a subpopulation of the state’s I/DD community and address that disparity. The NCCDD identified a barrier to services and supports for the Hispanic/Latino community caused by language access issues in response to the Administration on Community Living’s (ACL) mandate. Outreach to, and collaboration with, the Hispanic/Latino community to increase engagement and involvement is the Council’s proposed intent.

In addition, the Council has identified **Collective Impact** as the model to be used during the 2022-2026 Five-Year State Plan to develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives to produce systems change; therefore, the applicant selected for the initiative will be expected to operationalize activities to facilitate the five essential elements to a Collective Impact project, including:

1. Common Agenda:

All participants **share a vision for change** that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon actions.

1. Shared Measurement:

All participating organizations **agree on the way success will be measured and reported**, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.

1. Mutually Reinforcing Activities:

A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a **mutually reinforcing plan of action**.

1. Continuous Communication:

All players engage in **frequent and structured open communication** to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

1. Backbone Support:

An **independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative** provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Examples of when communities are ready or near ready for Collective Impact:

* There is a “champion” for this cause who has the ability to engage and encourage multiple sectors in the community and is willing to use that ability to help the community solve this problem;
* There is some local funding available to begin this effort or in-kind resources (protected time for selected staff members) to begin working to obtain funding;
* There is a history of other kinds of successful collaboration in the community among at least some of the relevant stakeholders;
* The general public is aware of this problem and cares about it or can be readily made aware and will care if they are aware.

***Priority will be given to organizations that offer:***

* Clear evidence of the agency’s capacity to carry out the proposed initiative.
* Evidence of a history of providing related services that are demonstrated to be person-centered.
* Documentation of collaborative relationships in the I/DD field. This should include letters of commitment from partnering organizations and other collaborating agencies.
* That their work and the response in the RFA demonstrates a clear understanding of the Collective Impact model of systems change.
* Preference will be given to entities based in North Carolina that are already familiar with how the I/DD system of services works in this state.

The funding for this RFA will be up to **$120,000.00** per year with required minimum of 25% non-federal matching funds ($40,000.00), for up to three years, with Year 1 beginning **January 1st, 2023** and ending **December 31st, 2023**. Within these parameters, an applicant shall propose a three-year work plan clearly identifying the outputs and outcomes for each year.  **The Year 1 budget is the only budget to be entered into the DD Suite application.**  Continuation of funding after each funded year depends on contractor’s performance, Council approval, and continued funding from the United States Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Upon approval for continuation funding, the scope of work for upcoming year will be jointly reviewed and revised by the NCCDD staff and contractor 90 days prior to the start of the upcoming year.

Definition of a Developmental Disability

Per the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 2000, section 102(8), “The term 'developmental disability' means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

* is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
* is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
* is likely to continue indefinitely;
* results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;

(i) Self-care;

(ii) Receptive and expressive language;

(iii) Learning;

(iv) Mobility;

(v) Self-direction;

(vi) Capacity for independent living;

(vii) Economic self-sufficiency; and

reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.”

**IV. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for-profit or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organizations, agencies, or businesses demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, non-profit private entities must also submit proof of current 501(c)3 status with a recent IRS determination letter dated in the current year. The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents

(see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

***USE OF FUNDS:***

Contract funds may be used to support personnel services, operating expenses, and contracted services. Funds must be budgeted in the categories listed in the line item budget. Applicants must develop a budget narrative to accompany the line item budget. The line item budget and the budget narrative must show a clear relationship between the proposed budget and the proposed activities stated in the initiative plan**.**

**Funds may not support efforts to engage in any political activities or lobbying.**

***PERFORMANCE MONITORING/QUALITY ASSURANCE:***

To meet the requirements of the initiative, the contractor must collaborate with NCCDD staff to:

* participate in trainings and meetings;
* participate in initiative evaluation;
* participate in the NCCDD federally mandated Periodic Performance Review and;
* participate in other activities identified or conducted by NCCDD.

Performance and quality assurance of this contract will be conducted as follows:

* NCCDD will conduct monitoring activities during each contract period and will utilize the contractor’s objectives as its assurance criteria for meeting outcomes.
* The contractor must submit a quarterly progress report through DD Suite and a monthly expenditure report to NCCDD.
* The contractor must submit an Annual Performance Measures Summary form.
* The contractor must submit an End of Year Progress Report.
* The contractor must be available to present at the quarterly NCCDD meetings.

**V. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND APPLICATION REVIEW**

The following is a general description of the process by which applicants will be selected for funding for this initiative.

* 1. RFA announcements are sent to prospective agencies and organizations, via email, and/or posted on the NCCDD website, the DHHS website, and the NCCDD social media pages.
	2. Written questions concerning the specifications in this RFA will be received until **July 11th, 2022** via email at [RFAinfo@nccdd.org](RFAinfo%40nccdd.org) to be answered at the Bidders’ Workshop. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted on the NCCDD website (www.nccdd.org) within 5 business days after the Bidders’ Workshop on **July 12th, 2022** and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form. Subsequent questions will be answered with their answers posted on the NCCDD website and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form prior to the application due date.
	3. Applications are due by 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time on **August 31st, 2022**. Electronic submission is required, except as otherwise noted. Complete application and attach/upload all necessary documents in DD Suite before submitting. The complete RFA package and instructions are available through the DD Suite electronic submission program ([www.ddsuite.org/](http://www.ddsuite.org/)).
	4. Applications will be evaluated by an RFA Review Committee. The recommendations of this committee will be reviewed by the NCCDD, which reserves the right to accept or reject the Review Committee’s recommendations.
	5. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a Request for Applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
	6. Application Process Dates Summary:
		+ **June 30th, 2022**: Request for applications distributed to eligible applicants and posted on the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities website ([www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org)).
		+ **July 11th, 2022**: Deadline for written RFA questions to be answered at the Bidders’ Workshop.
		+ **July 12th, 2022**: Interested applicants may attend a Bidders’ Workshop. If feasible, NCCDD may schedule an additional Bidders’ Workshop or Question & Answer Session at a date and location to be determined. Check [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org) for announcements.
		+ **August 31st, 2022**: Applications due to the NCCDD by close of business, 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
		+ **November 4th, 2022**: Award announced.
		+ **January 1st, 2023**:Contract begins.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS TO BE COMPLETED UPON AWARD**

See DD Suite to download these attachments – all of these documents must be completed if your agency is awarded the contract for this RFA prior to the execution of the contract:

* Project Profile page
* NCCDD Assurances
* Notice of Certain Reporting and Audit Requirements
* Conflict of Interest Policy/Letter (Contractor’s COI)
* Conflict of Interest Verification – Annual
* Indirect Cost Rate Letter – if applicable
* 501(c)(3) Status Determination Letter/Form (private non-profit agencies) (Note: Public organizations shall submit a document verifying their legal name and tax identification number.)
* IRS Tax Letter
* IRS Tax Exemption Verification Form (private non-profit agencies)
* State Certifications
* Federal Certifications
* DUNS Letter
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Contracts
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Expenditure Reports
* Certification of No Overdue Taxes (applies to non-governmental entities)
* Proof of Insurance, if applicable

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit the attachments along with their application. If attachments are not submitted and the applicant is selected to receive the funding for this initiative, the attachments must be completed and submitted with the contract. The NCCDD will not execute a contract until it is in receipt of all attachments. Failure to provide these timely may result in disqualification for funding.